

Role of Personality and Social Factors towards Purchase of Luxury Clothing in Online Settings: Moderating Role of Vanity

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Abstract

In this convenient world & era of online markets; consumer seeks easiest way to evaluate brands. Social factors and brand personality are vital attributes of luxury purchase intentions in traditional/physical market place. However, in digital world brand personality and social factors are quite different due to market dynamics. This study also explored moderating role of vanity on social factor because it impacts luxury brands online purchase intention. By adopting questionnaire research technique based on qualitative method 300 questionnaires were distributed among university students that work part-time in industry that don't have time to evaluate brands with a response rate of 84.66%. Data were gathered through convenient sampling which is sub type of Non-probability sampling technique and analyzed by descriptive & influential statistics on SPSS & Process macro. Resulted showed that social and personality factor positively effects online purchase intention of luxury brand among university students. The moderating role of vanity (physical) was significantly influencing social factors & purchase intentions. This will guide marketers to design better strategies, differentiating segmentation decisions & ultimately capturing niche market.

Keywords: Social factors; Personality factors; Luxury brand purchase intention; Vanity

Introduction

21st century is considered an electronic era, due to technology devices because most of the work is done by machines (Turunen, 2015). Nowadays sharing the brand experiences, people mostly use online platform, where people spends their almost one-third of daily time surfing online (Gautam & Sharma, 2017). Today's generation prefer and converted to online context shopping and this thing is a big challenge faced by traditional retailers (Krbová & Pavelek, 2015). A.C Nielson published a report in 2008 on consumers attitude which showed that Pakistan was ranked the world's second slowest taker of e-commerce. However, Husnain, & Toor (2017) concluded that Pakistani youth is passionate about SNSs like Face book, Twitter, and Instagram. In Pakistan, behavior of consumers regarding shopping via traditional ways is changing and consumers are shifting towards online shopping due to easiness, comfort & time saving. There was 12% growth recorded in Karachi Pakistan's e-tailing (Husnain, & Toor, 2017). Prior Studies also suggested that online shopping is better than conventional shopping in coming decades, especially in developing countries like Pakistan (Adnan, 2014) due to its ease and reliability.

During mid-20th Century, people purchase intention depend on branded products from non-labeled products (Cheah, Phau, Chong, & Shimul, 2015). It is noticeable that consumer involve in purchasing luxury brands are more conscious about product & make highly involvement in information gathering (Mamat, Noor & Noor, 2016). Consumers in Asian countries mostly purchase luxury products to show off their wealth and to obtain higher status (Zhang & Kim, 2013) it's all due to social factors. People buy brands to get social recognition among their surroundings. According to Kapferer & Bastien, (2009) that "what is luxury for someone may not be luxury for others". The work of Shukla (2012) suggested that brand conspicuousness need to be explored in emerging mar-

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kets, where rapid utilization of luxury branded products in middle-class consumers. Personality traits explain consumer inspiration, preferences of brands and provide motivation for the desired product (Harris and Lee, 2004). The work of Ul Islam, Rahman & Hollebeek (2017) suggested that personality is not exclusive factors in illustrating consumer behavior, other factors such as social factor need to be explored along with brand personality specially in consumer electronics, fashion, retail sector. Moreover, Phang et al., (2016) explored the effect of brand perception, social influence and vanity traits on luxury brand purchase intention in Malaysia. They suggested the importance of brand personality, quality (Lin, 2010) and brand image in online context.

In this study we rather than actually possessing luxury brands, examine only intention regarding getting luxury brands because intention has wider association and will often have a positive impact on an individual's actions (Ajzen, 1991). It is important to know which independent variable affects most on luxury brand purchase intention in online context. It is also important to notice that how people respond to information of brands that are available online that actually creates purchase intentions for new customers and how Personality factor and Social factor along with moderator Vanity affects online purchase intention of luxury brands. Continuing our base paper's future direction (Ul Islam, Rahman & Hollebeek, 2017) by changing country it is first time in Pakistan to explore online purchase intention of luxury brands by adding two independent variables at one time (Adnan, 2014). In the end of our study results we are able to understand that which gender highly used online context for luxury brands purchase intention, what personalities they have, their buying behaviors and factor which influence them most. For firms it is important to understand factors which are important for their brands to make better strategies, make better segmentations, decisions, increase their online purchase intentions and visits & ultimately to capture market and gain profit. Because founder of Alibaba (Jack Ma) stated that firms/ businesses that not change with the time and not adopt the online platforms/ social media as interacting tool with their potential customers will be excluded from their relevant industry and lose their market (Husnain & Toor, 2017).

The study will guide marketers for better understanding of social factors & personality factors and their effects on luxury brands purchase intentions in online context and role of moderator in social factors & purchase intention. Fashion consciousness has been explored as an important dimension that made effect on purchase decision and consumption behavior of a person's life style (Zhou, Yang & Hui, 2010). Highly fashion-conscious consumers were found to be 'younger' and present social values such as 'praise' 'excitement' and fun/ enjoyment' (Goldsmith and Stith, 1990). The reason for selecting target audience from clothing industry is due to its fashion consciousness, social values and demographics.

Review of literature

The idea of luxury has been the target of growing research in marketing literatures (Walley et al., 2013). This study mainly focused on the word luxury therefore by definition the word luxury and the consumption of luxury goods contain purchasing a product that shows value to both, individual and their related reference group. Similarly, what people considered products as luxury, such as owning a car, has become common and regular for today's people (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). On the other hand, previous sayings state by (Åvall, 2017) "it is not necessary that one thing is luxury for someone should be for others". The consumer involved in purchasing of luxury brands are more conscious about purchasing product because it contains highly involvement of risks (Childers & Rao, 1992). Therefore, a consumer seeks easiest way to evaluate brand and online context is important in this regard as it also resolve the trust issues of consumers (Pan & Chiou, 2011). Digital world offered new options to its users every day and its impact on consumer is huge and massive,

especially noticing the way they perceive the information (Carr, 2010). In modern society this is new mantra that people shop to represent themselves and for their emotional and psychological reasons. The rapidly growing use of the Internet has caused a special change in the way consumers relate themselves and communicate with brands (Moon & Kim, 2001). In Today's borderless world wealth is not only linked to the upper classes but to some extent middle class is also part of luxurious product segmentation. However, social class still has a part to play in describing conspicuous consumption as not only the upper classes uses their wealth as a signal to show their superior social status but now middle classes also uses it to compare themselves or to be part of the social class or classes with high ranks (Walley et al., 2013). This circumstance is known as Beccaria's Theory of Luxury

Personality traits

Desire and preference for product and motivations towards consuming it, is explained by personality traits (Harris & Lee, 2004). Therefore, we can say "personality is a highly related factor in explaining behavior on the Internet" (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010). For companies and marketers, it is important to explore and identify specific personality traits due to which individual create its association with specific brand (Marbach, Lages, & Nunan 2016). A previous study addressed the gap by explaining the consumers' Big Five personality traits that is combination of five categories extravagant, agreeableness, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and neuroticism (Landers & Lounsbury, 2006). Firstly, Neuroticism is illustrated as "assesses emotional uncertainty of consumer (e.g. calm vs. worried). Secondly, extroversion is considered as a personality trait that "assesses the quantity and potency of interpersonal interaction" (e.g. reserved vs. sociable). Thirdly, openness to Experience is a personality trait that "assesses the scope of proactive seeking and admiration of experience" (e.g. conventional vs. curious). Fourthly, agreeableness is a personality trait that "assesses the quality of one's interpersonal attitude (e.g. suspicious vs. trusting). Lastly, conscientiousness is personality trait that "assesses an individual's degree of organization, patience, and motivation in goal-directed behavior" (e.g. aimless vs. organized). The work of Harris and Lee (2004) is concluded that Personality traits explain consumer inspiration, preferences of brands and provide motivation for desired product. Therefore, the study proposed that:

H1- Personality factors positively influence on online purchase intention of luxury brands.

Social factors

According to Shukla (2012) social values and norms of social institutional rules that arose from the side of family and other reference groups put pressure on consumer luxury purchase intention. The Social Comparison Theory presented by Festinger (1954) concluded that people compare themselves with others when individuals cannot physically evaluate themselves, this theory is true especially in the frame of obvious consumption e.g. for luxury products (Zhang & Kim, 2013). Moreover, there are many luxury products having their own consumption theory, but this theory is associated with fashion industry because when there is fashion consumption there will always be consumption linked with conspicuousness. There are three various definition of status as assigned by society: Firstly, Royalty Secondly, status that is achieved by hard work or someone have the job better in comparison to others and Lastly, status obtained via showing off luxury brand consumptions (Eastman et al., 1999). The study of Turunen (2018) also focused on identifying status obtained via showing off luxury brand consumption. Consumption related to get status, associated with purchase, use, show off, possess and consuming of products and services only to obtain high rank in society and get status recognition. This literature enables us to generate our second hypothesis that is:

H2- Social factors positively influence on online purchase intention of luxury brands.

Vanity traits as moderator

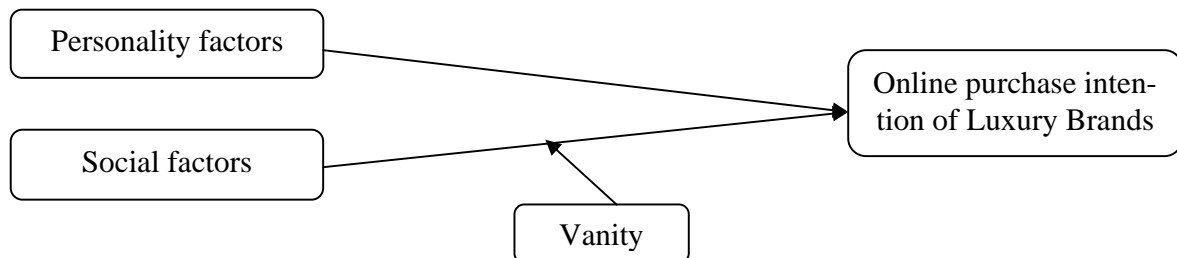
Social factor is related with vanity traits. Vanity traits is explained as “*having a lavish concern, or a positive view of, one’s physical appearance/personal achievements*” (Phang et al., 2016). The study of Phang et al., (2016) concluded that vanity types that are vanity physical and achievement explained once inside feeling and outside desire image in society achieved by symbolic utilization. Vanity can be observed, from an individual’s use and choice of cosmetic products, clothing products, and conspicuous consumption in general (Netemeyer et al., 1995). Moreover, Phang et al., (2016) argued that utilization of luxury fashion items is strongly due to vanity traits. Explaining the relationship among consumers who effected by traits of vanity, this study proposed that consumers mostly spends on high-prestige products and these types of consumers frequently want and consume fashion goods to satisfy their unique appetite and self-assurance and this research area there is not much research in online context. This led to third variable which is:-

H3- Vanity traits moderates the relationship of social factor and online purchase intention of luxury brands.

Online Purchase intention

Nowadays, people are well-aware and conscious about product/service purchase and benefits. Today’s world of online and off-line markets, consumer has lot of alternatives for product/service purchase choices such as: superstores, website, discount mobile-app, amazon, and megastores. Therefore, companies are very conscious to analyze consumer purchase intention to obtain the prominent market-share. However, consumers who are socially active and participative in society desire to show off their wealth, status and want.

to achieve honor from their surroundings. The research’s about consumers’ purchase intention and luxury brands many researchers adopted Arnould & Thompson, (2005) consumer culture theory to describes how consumers create and alter their personalities via the possessions of goods. Based on these arguments, this study proposed a framework as under:



Material and Methods

This study adopted deductive approach and used survey method (manual questionnaire & online questionnaire) in both genders (male & female). 300 respondents out of which, 254 responses were received back after discarding 46 incomplete and false questionnaires. Before this, we collected data from 45 audiences for pilot study. Questionnaire is divided in to two phases. Phase one contains demographic and filtered questions and Phase second contains questions of independents variables, moderating variable and dependent variable. Data for study collected from different university students and job holders which have not much time to go and purchase something, have easy access to internet and evaluate things before purchasing it as it is time taking procedure. This aged group from 19 and 50 shows that 75% of social media users and can be classify into two important groups: Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) and Generation Y (born between 1981 and 1997) (Perrin, 2015; Smith & Gallicano, 2015). Questionnaire is design with expert’s opinions and

scales are adopted from prior studies. Filtered questions are adopted from Zhang & Kim, (2013). Personality factor are taken from Ul Islam, Rahman & Hollebeek, (2017) and adopted sixteen questions from it. The Cronbach's alpha of Personality factors (PF) is .794. Social factor scale is taken from Truong et al. (2008), Hung et al. (2011) which consisted on seven questions. Cronbach's alpha of Social factors (SF) was .566 and after deleting question SFCV3 & SFSV1. we get Cronbach's alpha .727. Vanity dimensions scales are taken from (Hung et al., 2011) and adopted eight questions. Cronbach's alpha of vanity achievement (VA) and vanity physical (VP) was .216 and .767 separately and if we combine them we get .480 Cronbach's alpha. Therefore, we drop our moderators' variables sub dimension which is vanity achievement and only take vanity physical. In the last Purchase intention scale are taken from (Hung et al., 2011) and adopt three questions. Reliability and Cronbach's alpha of purchase intention is .755. The responses were collected on a five-point Likert scale from "*strongly disagree to strongly agree*".

Results and discussion

The demographics profile showed that male was 146 and female have 108. With respect to age group 45.3% were 20 to 25 years old, followed by 33.9% that belong to 25 to 30 years. The marital status of respondents showed that 68.9% respondents were single, and 31.1% respondents are married. Based on job status, 44.9% respondents were enjoying a professional life, followed by students that represent 40.6% of the sample. The income level of respondents showed 32.3% have less than 20K (PKR) to spend/month followed by 26.4% respondents that have income from 20K to 30K (PKR).

Most commonly used Social Networking Sites (SNSs) is Facebook that present 52.8% followed by Instagram with 20.5%. The respondent's frequency to purchase luxury products is mostly occur on events that represent 39%, followed by once a season (summer/winter) that is 35.4%. Respondents visit online luxury brand-related contents on events that showed 34.6%. However, 25.6% respondents view luxury brand-related contents regularly but cannot made purchase due to their income level as presented in table. 47.2% respondents follow official page of luxury brand that means respondents are well-aware of brand awareness and meaning.

Table1: Respondents Profile (n=254)

Description	Freq.	%age	Description	Freq.	%age
Gender			Most Often Used SNSs		
Male	146	57.5	Face book	134	52.8
Female	108	42.5	Twitter	22	8.7
Age (years)			Instagram	52	20.5
Below 20	17	6.7	Company Community/blog	46	18.0
20 to 25	115	45.3	Frequency to purchase brand		
25 to 30	86	33.9	Once a month or more then	65	25.6
30 and above	36	14.2	On events	99	39
Marital status			Seasonal	90	35.4
Single	175	68.9	View luxury-related content online		
Married	79	31.1	Regular	65	25.6
Designation			Once a week	49	19.3
Self-employment	20	7.9	Once a month	52	20.5
Business	15	5.9	On events	88	34.6

Description	Freq.	%age	Description	Freq.	%age
Professional job	114	44.9	Follow Luxury Brands on SNSs		
Student	103	40.6	Yes	120	47.2
Others	2	0.8	No	134	52.8
Income (PKR)/month					
Under 20K	82	32.3			
20K - 30K	67	26.4			
31K - 40K	47	18.5			
Above 40K	58	22.8			

The descriptive analysis showed that Personality factor showed mean of 3.72 with std. deviation of .553. Vanity (Physical) showed mean of 3.99 with std. deviation of .761. There is low standard deviation because data is close to its mean and dispersion is low. The Skewness & Kurtosis showed data normality test that weather data is normally distributed/not. Skewness showed distribution of data and kurtosis showed how much peaked and flat the data is in distribution. In this study, data is moderately skewed but more on negative side. The kurtosis is known as platykurtic or somehow on the side of flatness. The correlation matrix presented the relationship among variables, generally all proposed variables are positivity significant at $p < 0.01$. Moreover, social factors & purchase intention presented a correlation of 0.321 ($p < 0.01$) and vanity (physical) & purchase intention presented a correlation of 0.305 ($p < 0.01$).

Table 2: Descriptive Results

Construct	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis	1	2	3	4
1 Vanity physical	3.9970	.76111	-.731	.390	1			
2 Personality factor	3.6988	.55313	-.730	1.535	.426**	1		
3 Social factor	3.2748	.83741	-.337	-.208	.301**	.322**	1	
4 Purchase intention	3.7572	.84146	-.894	.976	.305**	.352**	.321**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).								
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).								

The linear regression relationship between personality and social factors with luxury brand purchase intention showed that model is significant at 0.002 (99% confidence level) with F-value of 21.268 and Adj. R^2 of 20.3% which means 20.3% influence on online luxury brand purchase intention is due to social and personality factors. Thus, the study concluded that personality factor positively impacts online purchase intention of luxury brand with ($\beta=0.227$, $t\text{-value}=2.059$, $p=0.041$). Moreover, social factor positively impacts purchase intention of luxury brand with ($\beta=0.197$, $t\text{-value}=3.325$, $p=0.001$). Therefore, 1-unit changes in Social factor brings 0.197 units change in online purchase intention of luxury brands.

Table 3 Relationship between IVs & DV

Dependent Variable	Online Purchase intention		
R ²	0.203		
F-value	21.268		
Sig	0.002**		
	β	T-value	Sig.
Personality factor	0.227	2.059	0.041*
Social factor	0.197	3.235	0.001**

The moderation by process-macro (REF) showed R² of 17% with F-value of 17.24 and t-value of -2.47 at 99% confidence interval.

Table 4 Moderation

R-square	F-value	T-value	Sig	Beta coefficient	LLCI	ULCCI
0.17	17.24	-2.47	0.01	-0.18	-0.32	-0.04

The social factors impact online purchase intention of luxury brand with ($\beta=0.98$, $t=3.27$, $p=.00$) at 95% confidence interval. Vanity (physical) impact online purchase intention of luxury brand with ($\beta=.77$, $t=3.51$, $p=.00$) at 95% confidence interval. These results fulfill the parameters for exploring moderating role of (vanity*social factors) with online purchase intention of luxury brand.

Table 5 Moderation analysis

	β	Se	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
α	-0.21	0.9	-0.23	0.82	-1.98	1.57
Social factor	0.98	0.3	3.27	.00	0.39	1.57
Vanity physical	0.77	0.22	3.51	.00	0.34	1.21
Interaction term	-0.18	0.07	-2.47	0.01	-0.32	-0.04

The interaction term (vanity*social factors) showed ($\beta=-.18$, $t=-2.47$, $p=.01$) at 95% confidence interval. These findings are inconsistent with the previous one and demand further detailed investigation regarding inconsistent moderation. Personality factor have direct effect on online purchase intention of luxury brand. Among personality factors openness, agreeableness and extroversion are major contributor for building brand personality among youth in online context. However, conscientiousness showed negative impact in building brand personality in online context because fashion products are more appealing in physical context. The finding is aligned with the work of Ul Islam et al., (2017), Casidy, (2012) & Song et al., (2017). The relationship of vanity, social factors and purchase intentions is previously investigated by Phang et al., (2016), Mamat et al., (2016), Hung et al., (2011) & Loureiro et al., (2017). The work of Mamat et al., (2016) stated that vanity impact purchase intention, however vanity (achievement) showed significant impact in off-line context rather than vanity (physical). In this study, vanity (physical) is only significant because of its market environment which are designed with respect to digital marketing.

Conclusion

Consumer involve in purchasing luxury brands are more conscious about product & make highly involvement in information gathering. In real life, people haven't time to compare or evaluate brands in traditional way, so they use online context which is easier, time saving and faster. Aca-

demographic marketing literature point out internal/external factors that influence luxury branded products purchase (Phang et al., 2016). In emerging market, like Pakistan -online business are growing at rapid speed but brand meaning is not yet clear to target customers. The brand awareness and meaning are confused due to counterfeits because in digital market, it's very hard to understand brand meaning tools. The normative element showed that social factors impact purchase decision because consumer judgment about luxury brands is a result of peer's/group expectation (Lee and Choong, 2001). Brand personality is an outcome of brand performance based on imagery and personality attributes. The primary attribute for digital market is service-ability and effectiveness which depends on style, design and product reliability. Marketing managers should promote strategies through which online users share fashion styles and designs. The way to enhance commitment in digital market must be considered as a tool that rely on peers or celebrities (blogs) to deliver their opinion. Future Studies might consider such as brand perception and WoM to explore post purchase behavioral intentions of luxury brands. Moreover, researchers should consider generation Z purchase intentions towards luxury brands because these customers are more enthusiast users of Social Networking Sites

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